

## THE HELEN PRIZE



**AWARDED MARCH 4, 1998  
SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, QUE.  
CANADA**



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## **THE HELEN PRIZE**

The Helen Prize is an international award to celebrate the accomplishments of women.

The Helen Prize honours all women – those in traditional as well as non-traditional jobs, those in developing countries along with those in industrialized countries.

It honours women for their gifts to humanity, the arts, ideas, economy, politics, literature, children, medicine, peace and the environment. It respects and acknowledges the multitude of ways in which women contribute positively to life on this planet.

The Helen Prize was inspired by the work of Helen Caldicott, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility who has devoted years of her life to the cause of peace and passionately spends time and energy in raising the conscience of the world. She inspires all of us to make changes in our everyday lives, to know that every action we take is important.

This prize is for the unknown Helens, who, like many women before them in the history of the world, on center stage or in some obscure corner, have given of themselves to create, defend and expand the beauty and value of life.

## **AKHTAR NARAGHI**

### **Founder of The Helen Prize to honour Women**

Akhtar listens to and follows her heart. As a poet and a writer, she identifies with women no matter where she is. Akhtar is always touched at seeing how hard women work and how much of their life energy they give to preserve and improve the life of their communities.

When Akhtar heard Helen Caldicott's keynote speech at the International Interdisciplinary Conference in Dublin in 1987, she was enraged at knowing how hard Helen had worked to establish Physicians for Nuclear Responsibility and yet, was passed over when the Nobel Prize was awarded. It was in that moment Akhtar chose to do something. She came back to Montreal and gathered a small group of women to start the International Organization of The Helen Prize for Women. It took many meetings and many deep breaths to birth an organization whose purpose would be to discover and acknowledge women. During ten years and despite challenges to her health, Akhtar established a structure for this vision, gathered an advisory board, applied for and received charitable status. It is because of Akhtar's devotion, dedication and enthusiasm that we have The Helen Prize today.

Dr. Akhtar Naraghi  
P.O. Box 781 Stn Place du Parc  
Montreal, P.Q. H2W 2P3  
Canada

## **INVITATION TO BECOME A PART OF THE HELEN PRIZE**

You are invited to become a member of The Helen Prize by sending a tax-deductible donation to:

The Helen Prize  
%Pigeon Hill Bruideen  
1965 St. Armand Rd  
St. Armand, Quebec J0J 1T0  
Canada

Telephone: 514-248-2524

Fax: 514-248-7999

The yearly membership donation affords you the privilege of nominating a woman for The Helen Prize as well as giving you a charitable tax deduction receipt.

You are also invited to develop teams in your own community/country to discover unknown Helens and to raise money so that significant support may be given to honour women and their work.

We hope you will spread the news by sharing The Helen Prize pamphlets, The Helen Prize book with the stories of all the women nominated each year, and other creative ways that acknowledge and encourage women in their contributions to their communities and the world.



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Educator

**Present the 1998 nominees of**

**THE HELEN PRIZE**







## **Judith Berlyn** **Organizer Changing the Priorities**

Judy has been working on disarmament, peace, human rights and social justice issues since 1985 when she helped to found Westmount Initiatives for Peace (WIP). She has organized demonstrations, war toys boycotts, library displays, conferences and seminars, and lobbied elected representatives at all levels. She works with a number of Montreal, Canadian and international NGO's including the Centre de ressources sur la non-violence, the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, the Social Justice Committee of Montreal, and the Canadian Voice of Women. Judy coordinates the Quebec section of the Canadian Peace Alliance, a member of the Consultative Group of Canada's UN Ambassador for Disarmament, was a major contributor to the NGO statement on the Abolition of Nuclear weapons for 1995.

Judy is appreciated for her intellect and devotion, but also her unflagging willingness to pitch in at every level: midnight photocopying forays, leafletting, or rounding up the extra food needed for a pot-luck supper, doing the dishes and stacking chairs. Perhaps more than she ever expected, Judy lives Helen Caldicott's challenge..."If you love this planet, you'll have to change the priorities of our life."

Judith Berlyn

381 Elm Street

Westmount, P.Q. H3Z 1Z4

Canada



**Mary Billy**

## **Sharing the Wisdom/Mentoring the Young**

Mary is one of the founding members of the Squamish, B.C. Womens' Centre, helps organize The Amazing Greys annual celebration for older women on Vancouver Island and is a published author: In the Turning: A Summer Journal of a Sojourner in the Women's Movement (1986). For the past seven years, since the first anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, she has kept a Femicide list which now contains over 1100 names.

Mary shares her visions, her struggles, and her hopes with the many women, young and old who are drawn to her. It was during the years when she experienced Chronic Fatigue that Mary started publishing "Herspectives Magazine", because the writing, gathering and editing the writing of others, and the mailings were all something she could do in her own time as part of her healing. This is one way she reaches out to women all over Canada, North America and the world.

Mary goes out of her way to share her inner richness despite her own limited material resources. She is a living angel.

Mary Billy  
Box 2047  
Squamish, B.C. V0N 3G0  
Canada



**Beverly Britton**  
**Founder & Director of Lifeline Network for**  
**Peace: Promoting peace and global healing**  
**through body, mind and spirit**

I met Beverly at our own local chapter of The Women of Vision group. She is very inspiring. She talked about her work taking healers and therapists from many countries, into war torn areas like Bosnia. She spent most of her personal savings to do this.

Currently she is attempting to set up a Peace Healing Conference Centre for policy makers near Washington, D.C. Early in her activist days, Beverly met and was personally inspired by Helen Caldicott. In those days Beverly co-founded SCOPE (Student Committee on Political Education).

Beverly Britton  
P.O. Box 23091  
Alexandria, VA 22304  
U.S.A.



**Amira Elias**  
**Activist for the Women and Children of Iraq**

Amira is a Turkman from Iraq, living in Montreal for 32 years and raising her voice for the women and children of her homeland. In 1991, during the Gulf War she managed to convince UNICEF to send medication to the dying children of Iraq. At the time, she was living in the Middle East and felt isolated in her pain amidst the cheers for the US led coalition. She came back to Canada in 1992, and in 1994 as a Canadian citizen, she pursued a campaign of sensitization for the suffering in Iraq. Her message fell on deaf ears. No one wanted to get involved. She kept speaking on the radio and through newspapers. Using her own money and armed with a camera, she made the 12 hour bus trip back to Baghdad from Jordan and shot film footage. CFCF Channel 12 promised to air her film, "The Unheard Voices of Iraqi Women." She still cannot finish the film for lack of funds. In the past 30 years, she has been active in promoting good relations between East and West: she helped women who came from the Middle East adapt to the ways of Canada and in the Middle East, she helped "foreigners" settle and understand her culture. Amira has taught Arabic and is involved in inter-faith and ecumenical women's groups. Her adaptability, tenacity and kindness impresses and inspires.

Amira Elias

295-10 rue Dupont

Ste. Genevieve, P.Q. H9H 2P8

Canada





**Vivian Labrie**  
**Working for Economic Renewal and Human Rights**

Vivian Labrie works for the Carrefour de pastorale en monde ouvrier in Quebec City. She has been involved in the creation of a regional community development structure. She animates groups and coalitions working for economic renewal and human rights through a popular education approach. Vivian has recently represented grassroots groups on the Quebec government's standing committee to review and propose changes to the social security safety net.

I am privileged to propose Vivian for The Helen Prize in recognition of her years of commitment to working with the marginalized and the voiceless in society.

Vivian Labrie  
Carrefour de pastorale en monde ouvrier  
435 de Roi  
Quebec, P.Q. G1K 2X1  
Canada



**Joanne Maissoneuve**  
**Dedicated to her People**

Joanne has spent more than a decade in the small community of Carmacks, Yukon volunteering for every aspect of town life. She has been in the schools, organized events, raised money, accompanied children to the North American Indigenous Games. She is a woman dedicated to the health and strength of her people and their children. Over the years she has been a mainstay and an inspiration.

Joanne Maissoneuve  
General Delivery  
Carmacks, Yukon Y0B 1K0  
Canada



**Joan Matthews  
Community Leader**

Ten years ago at the age of 55 Joan took a great risk in order to fulfill a lifelong dream. She used the major portion of her inheritance money and built a sacred space for all to partake.

She called it the Sutton Yoga Centre. The word spread that within a very beautiful space we each could get in touch with our own spirituality through our bodies. We came from all directions. After a while Joan began a weekly Sunday evening meditation. Throughout the years I have heard many individuals say that it is through Joan and the centre that they feel a sense of belonging.

Joan has also taught Mandala drawing to people of all ages and all walks of life. Her reputation spans continents as she was invited to teach her style of yoga at a World Conference on Yoga, in New Zealand.

Joan reaches out to schools, girl guides and youth conferences. It is due to Joan's ability to make everyone feel welcome and special, that this centre thrives.

Joan Matthews  
111 Principale N.  
Sutton, P.Q. J0J 1M0  
Canada



**Elizabeth Mazanec**  
**Teaching through Mind, Body and Spirit**

Elizabeth Certified midwife, Master Herbalist, and founder of the North East College of Healing Arts and Science, has been an herbalist since 1974 and a midwife since 1980. The College is dedicated to the development of Health Care Professionals including homeopaths, midwives, herbalists and naturopaths who guide and empower people to participate in their own healing process. Unfortunately, the College had to close temporarily in 1997 because of lack of funds. Elizabeth is currently taking a personal healing sabbatical.

Elizabeth always gives that little bit of extra support and inspires others to concretize their dreams. She bases her work and her life on the belief that through combining intellectual, contemplative and artistic disciplines, the process of creative personal development is initiated. Elizabeth's work is her spiritual path and she has created the beautiful vehicle of this college through which to share her vision with others.

Elizabeth Mazanec  
P.O. Box 137  
Acworth, N.H. 03601  
U.S.A.





**Alice Mead**  
**Journey to a Congressional Roundtable**

Alice is a former art teacher who had to retire on a disability pension in 1993. In her research as a writer of children's novels, she became knowledgeable about the plight of over one million children under police occupation in Kosovo. Since 1990, they have been deprived of education and health care. After the occupation, all the international organizations were forced out of the region leaving these children with no aid workers to intervene on their behalf. Alice decided to go and see for herself. What Alice witnessed appalled her. She wrote and self-published Journey to Kosovo to raise awareness and began bringing high school students over to her community to finish their schooling. She made a 15 min video documentary which she circulated to governmental organizations in her country and succeeded in getting a Congressional Round Table established to work on the issues. Alice has made five trips to the region. Her novel, Adem's Cross, about a young victim of ethnic violence has been translated into French, German and Swedish. She is currently in Masadonia in an effort to have this book translated into the languages of the region, so that it can be used to raise discussion among the young people involved.

Alice Mead  
9 Bea Lane  
Cumberland, Maine 04021  
U.S.A.



**Rita McComber**  
**Instrumental in Development of Social**  
**Programs**

Rita lived many years in the United States, like many Kahnawake families, and on return in the 1980's to her home and territory, used her great energy, organizing skills and commitment to her people in many ways. Contributed to the development of the Kahnawake Survival School (secondary, part of the Kahnawake controlled Educational system now in place), Golden Age Centre, Means on Wheels, cooking for pilgrims to Kateri Tekawitha Shrine, Women's Drop In Centre (now closed) food distribution during 1990 Crisis, starting the Cancer support Group, after her own breast cancer, cooking in the shelter and preparing the meals for elders still in their homes during the ice storm, defending the environment.

Rita McComber  
P.O. Box 451  
Kahnawake, J0L 1B0  
Canada



**Kawennanoron Dorris Diabo Montour**  
**"Precious Words":**  
**Keeping the Language Alive**

A respected elder and well loved educator in Kahnawake and Kanesatake, Dorris is a fluent Kanien'Keha (Mohawk) speaker who often taught her elementary classes in the language, and is now one of the leading supporters of efforts to save the language from extinction, using it in skits, on the community radio, and teaching adults at the new language centre. Her late husband, Sonorase (Angus) was a high steel worker. Dorris lived with him in Brooklyn for many years developing with other women a Kanien'"Keha Hymn Book. She was vice-principal of Kateri School in Kahnawake until her retirement in 1975. She has dedicated her time and energy to activities in church and community that bring people together and promote unity, (e.g. Meals on Wheels, World Day Of Prayer). A beautiful singer, she has passed her love of music on to her young granddaughter. She has supported the development of First Nations self-governing structures. During the ice storm she helped prepare meals at one shelter and kept people's spirits up with her lasting sense of humour.

Kawennanoron Dorris D. Montour  
P.O. Box 114  
Kahnawake, J0L 1B0  
Canada



## **Shree Mulay**

### **A True Feminist of Extraordinary Vision**

Dr. Shree Mulay is a true feminist whose activism is to empower women. Shree's dedication to women's equality is reflected in the choices she makes in her research. She works on the issue of women's health at McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women where she is currently Director. Recently, she challenged the promoters of the drug, quinacrine, being widely used as a non-surgical sterilizing agent for women in 19 developing countries.

In 1981, Shree was one of the founding members of the South Asian Women's Community Centre (SAWCC) conceived in order to serve the special needs of women immigrants from South Asian countries. In 1991, SAWCC hosted a groundbreaking conference on conjugal violence and now welcomes all women within its space. Shree extended her work for women across Canada, when in 1993, she was elected to the executive of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. Shree is a role model in her career choice of a non-traditional profession. Dr. Mulay is a woman of extraordinary vision, who with determination, energy and commitment makes her philosophy and beliefs a reality.

Dr. Shree Mulay, Director McGill Centre for  
Research and Teaching on Women  
3483 Peel Street  
Montreal, P.Q. H3A 1W7  
Canada





**Martha Orozco Ossio**  
**President of The committee For the Defense**  
**Of the Quechua People**

Martha , a member of the native Quechuan people of Bolivis, was fortunate enough to obtain a university post graduate degree. This won her the privelege of winning a post in the university itself. While she was enjoying the benefits of the middle class she became painfully aware of the attempted genocide of The Quechua People.

No longer able to live this dichotomy, Martha chose to leave her university position in favour of organizing her people. She returned to her native dress, knowing that this would put her at risk.

For the past 13 months, Martha has been walking around the world in order to raise the consciousness of the plight of the Quechua People. She has undertaken this project without knowing if or when any funding will come her way.

If you are interested in learning more about the Quechuan People and/or wish to contribute to this project, please write to the address below.

Martha Orozco Ossio  
c/o Deanna Geddo  
99 Hudson Rd.  
Calumet, Quebec J0V 1B0  
Canada



**Barbara Seifred**  
**Creative\ Unconventional Peace Messenger**

Barbara is a dedicated, longtime, frontline, peace, environment and human rights activist. She was one of the first members of West Islanders for Nuclear Disarmament often providing the glue for the group. She looked after new members and followed up, making sure their names were on the list. She even kept coming to meetings after she had moved into the city. Eventually she joined Westmount Initiatives for Peace and was very active helping with the newsletter and the many briefs that they presented to various commissions.

Barb organized the local chapter of the Raging Grannies although she wasn't a great singer. She went on to be one of the main sources of lyrics for songs. She brings the peace message to the public in an unconventional and amusing manner. Now Barbara is on the steering committee of the Canadian Peace Alliance and a member of the board of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility. She is a tireless activist and her creativity is always evident in whatever way it needs to be. Barb is constantly writing, phoning and faxing her opinions to those in government etc. who need to be prodded or shamed into action. Her dedication and perseverance inspire.

Barbara Seifred  
2273 Hampton  
Montreal, P.Q. H4A 2K5  
Canada



**Emily Shihadeh**  
**Lecturer Performer**

Emily does workshops and a theatre piece – “Grapes & Figs Are In Season; A Palestinian Woman’s Story”. I recently saw the piece at the San Fransisco Library and marveled at her warmth and perceptiveness. One is enriched and challenged to further consider matters both Palestinians and Americans. Indeed here is one woman moving mountains and building bridges of understanding.

“.....in terms of profundity, provocativeness and sheer entertainment value – Emily’s lecture performance ranks as high as any we’ve offered.”

Emily is an American of Palestinian Quaker heritage. Born in Jerusalem she grew up in what is now part of the occupied West Bank. She brings her passion for healing conflictual relationships to her work as a counselor as well as a performer.

Emily Shihadeh  
3440 25<sup>th</sup> St. Apt. #405  
San Fransisco, CA 94110-3860  
U.S.A.



## **Anne Silverstone Humanitarian**

Anne Silverstone has been a great advocate and role model for more than 60 years both for her family of 7 children and the many Montreal women including myself who came into contact with her, many of us through contact with her at "The Little Shop". One of her "graduates" was Donna Read. Anne has always worked at the grass roots level as well as crossing ethnic and religious lines and in her own quiet way has had considerable success in that women always returned to their "roots".

Anne Silverstone's disposition has always endeared her to her peers and any one she came in contact with. She is forthright in her won way and has always worked towards promoting changes in attitudes about women. She was one of the first women I knew who encouraged us to develop our skills and improve our own status as women in society. And she has been doing this for more than 60 years.

Therefore I would have no hesitation in nominating Anne Silverstone as being the first recipient of The Helen Prize for women.

Anne Silverstone  
C/O Katy Devolpi  
47Dobie Ave.  
TMR, P.Q. H3P 1R9  
Canada





## **Halimatou Traore** **Improving Women's Lives and Health**

Halimatou has worked for many years to improve the conditions of life and health for women in Mali, West Africa. She is director of the CFAR (Center for Training of Rural Animators) in Que'llessebougou. This center offers ongoing training to the literacy, health and social workers as well as the traditional birth attendants in the rural villages.

Halimatou participated in a maternal health project sponsored by the Canadian Institute for Adult Education (ICEA) in 1989, and she visited CLSC's and hospitals with midwives in Quebec.

She is dynamic, generous, avant-garde and deeply committed to finding opportunities to improve conditions for women in West Africa where polygamy and female circumcision are standard practices. She sees education for girls and women as an essential part of personal and economic development and liberation.

Halimatou Traore  
Directrice, C.F.A.R. de Quelessebougou  
Republique du Mali  
West Africa



**Barbra Wiener**  
**Founder of WCRC**

Barbra founded the Women's Cancer Resource Centre (WCRC), in 1992, following the deaths of her sister and mother from breast cancer. She herself is a cancer survivor. For the first four years of its existence WCRC was housed in a small office in the downtown Minneapolis YWCA. Thanks to Barb's tenacity, funding was found which allowed the office to be moved to a larger space. WCRC now houses a small library and resource room and a group meeting space. Barb and assistant director Laurie Moser staff the organization and spend their days talking to women and their partners who are all at different stages of their cancer journeys. WCRC sponsors a one-of-its-kind support group for Lesbian partners of women with cancer. Barb and Laurie also do public speaking and education in a variety of settings.

In 1996, WCRC sponsored this region's first-ever conference to examine linkage between environmental pollutants and cancer. WCRC is a splendid example of how one woman's vision and tenacity can be transformed into a thriving organization touching many, many lives.

Barbra Wiener  
1815 E. 41<sup>st</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
U.S.A.



**W.O.W. (Women of Words)**  
**A Feminist Women's Creative Writing Group**

W.O.W. was founded in 1991 at Concordia University Women's Centre, where we still meet every other Sunday afternoon. Members are: Avis Anderson, Louise Hinton, Helen Siourbas and Martha Brooke. Although Martha Brooke Geisbrecht was the founder (the group was a continuation of a creative writing workshop she gave at a conference on Women & Body Images organized by the Women's Centre) we would like to be recognized as a collective so that we would be the "Mother" which starts more cells all around the world.

Developing a voice, getting unblocked, and being creative is emphasized over other people's opinions which may silence a fragile, burgeoning voice or writer.

We have done numerous Readings as a group or as individuals. In 1997, we published a chapbook called "PERTURBATIONS" and had a book launch at Bistro 4. The book consisted of five writers, 3 poems each. We hope to solicit funds in order to publish more and form other cells.

Martha Brooke Giesbrecht  
1830 Duff Court Apt #206  
Lachine, P.Q. H8S 1C8  
Canada



**Leyla Zana**  
**First Kurdish Female MP**

Leyla Zana was the first Kurdish Woman to be elected by an overwhelming majority to serve in the Turkish Parliament. She was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for her commitment and struggle for the national and cultural rights of the Kurds and for a political solution to the Kurdish conflict. She will have to spend another 13 years in the Turkish jail.

Through the Women's Initiative: "Freedom for Leyla Zana" organization, many actions have been and continue to be organized in order to free Leyla and other Kurdish MP's. If you are interested in becoming involved with this project please write to the address below.

Women's Initiative: "Freedom for Leyla Zana"  
UK co-ordination: Action for Kurdish Women  
Peace in Kurdistan Campaign  
44 Ainger Road,  
London, NW3 3AT  
England

## THE HELEN PRIZE MEMBERS

1998

Gwen Andreotti	U.S.A.	Lanie Melamed	Canada
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Marsha Akman	Canada	Christophe Novakowski	Canada
Linda Bayers	Canada	Amy Elizabeth O'Neil	Canada
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Sharon Helfer	Canada	Joan Dillon Sullivan	U.S.A.
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Judy Mappin	Canada	Jean Walsh	U.S.A.



**TO NOMINATE A WOMAN**

**FOR THE 1999 HELEN PRIZE:**

- **Become a member of**

**THE HELEN PRIZE**

- **Send the woman's story**

**In your own language to:**

**THE HELEN PRIZE  
% PIGEON HILL BRUIDEEN  
1965 ST. ARMAND RD  
PIGEON HILL, QUEBEC  
JOJ 1T0 CANADA**

**FAX: 514-2487999**





INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF **THE HELEN PRIZE**  
FOR WOMEN

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